

EAST CENTRAL EUROPE:  
BETWEEN THE BALTIC AND THE ADRIATIC

OSTMITTELEUROPA: ZWISCHEN OSTSEE UND ADRIA

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The University of Debrecen  
Faculty of Humanities  
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## Balancing between Loyalties The Teutonic Order Bailiwick of Utrecht and the Formation of the Dutch State, 1528–1648\*

### ABSTRACT

During the Dutch Revolt, the Teutonic Order Bailiwick of Utrecht found itself caught between two fires: the rebels and the legitimate authority of the Spanish king, who had been sovereign of the Netherlands since Charles V expanded his Burgundian inheritance with a few territories and loosened the Burgundian Circle from the Holy Roman Empire, transferring it together with the Spanish possessions to his son Philip II. While at first the fiction was maintained that the battle was not against the king himself but against his evil advisers, with the abjuration of Philip II in 1581 that was over. The rebellious area became a republic of independent provinces, increasingly Calvinist in character. From then on, the province of Utrecht had authority over the Bailiwick of Utrecht. This institution, under the leadership of the fiercely Catholic Land Commander Jacob Taets van Amerongen, resisted the push for Protestantization. He also remained loyal to the Habsburg Grand Master of the Teutonic Order and in 1594 he sent knights to Hungary to fight the Turks, whom the Dutch actually viewed as allies. This created a security problem for the new state. In 1615, the Estates of Utrecht decided that the next land commander and also new knights should be Protestant. In 1640, the Protestantization process was finished with the abolition of celibacy, which marked a break with the Grand Master. Henceforth, the Utrecht Teutonic knights were Protestant, mostly married nobles, who functioned as politicians or army officers in the Dutch Republic. This state was recognized at the Westphalian Peace in 1648, including the Spanish king.

**Keywords:** Teutonic Order, military orders, mobility, state formation processes, balance of power

On May 8/18, 1640, the Estates of Utrecht ratified the decision to no longer require the knight-brethren of the Teutonic Order Bailiwick of Utrecht (*Ridderlijke Deutsche Orde Balije van Utrecht*) to leave the Order upon

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\* I want to thank Dr. Anton Caruana-Galizia for his useful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

marriage.<sup>1</sup> Thus the break between the Bailiwick and the Grand Master in Mergentheim became a fact. The Protestantization already underway was problematic in itself, but breaking the essential vow of celibacy was entirely unacceptable to the Central Order. The decision cleared the way for the Utrecht land commander Hendrik Casimir van Nassau-Dietz to realize his own marriage plans, but it came too late for him: two months later he was killed in battle against the Spaniards during the siege of Hulst near Antwerp. The war ended eight years later, when at the Peace of Westphalia the Dutch Republic was recognized by the king of Spain. These events show how closely the fortunes of the Bailiwick of Utrecht were linked to the Dutch state formation process. In this article I will follow the processes during most of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century. In doing so, I will begin with a brief history from the birth of the Bailiwick in the thirteenth century. I will end with an epilogue to the present.

## **Emergence and Development of the Bailiwick of Utrecht in the Low Countries**

Soon after the foundation of the Teutonic Order in the Holy Land, endowments began to appear in the area that is now the Kingdom of the Netherlands. At the time, that was a patchwork of principalities in the northwestern corner of the Holy Roman Empire. The term “Netherlands” (or Low Countries) is essentially an after-the-fact construction for a series of territories, not only in the Holy Roman Empire, but also in the Kingdom of France.<sup>2</sup> It is not even entirely clear which principalities in the current states of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, as well as parts of France and Germany, fall under this term. The most important were Flanders, Brabant, Guelders and Holland. The prince-bishoprics of Utrecht, Liège and Cambrai can also be included in this umbrella term.

The first donation to the Teutonic Order in these regions was at Dieren in the County of Guelders in 1218. Shortly thereafter, a participant in

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<sup>1</sup> In the Dutch Republic, until 1700, Gregorian timekeeping was used in the provinces of Holland and Zeeland and Julian timekeeping in the other provinces, referred to as new and old style. In the records of the Bailiwick of Utrecht, old style is maintained. It is customary to mention both variants in these cases, as here 8/18 May 1640. <https://dwc.knaw.nl/toegangen/eenheden/kalender-en-tijdrekening/> (Accessed on 15 September 2025)

<sup>2</sup> Kennedy, James C., *A Concise History of the Netherlands*. Cambridge, 2017. 3–6.



the Fifth Crusade, knight Sweder van Dingede, donated a piece of land near Schalkwijk, south of the bishop's city of Utrecht. In 1231, his son, also called Sweder, did the same with a piece of land just outside the walls of Utrecht.<sup>3</sup> On this parcel a commandery house was built, which went up in flames during a siege by Count William IV of Holland in 1345. As a reward for the loyalty of the Order, the then Bishop of Utrecht, Jan van Arkel, donated a plot of land within the city walls, on which a Teutonic House with a large church was built.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, there was an separate Bailiwick of Utrecht, while all the possessions of the Teutonic Order in the Low Countries had previously been under the *magister partium inferiorum* (Master of the Netherlands).<sup>5</sup> In the second half of the thirteenth century, the counts of Holland had tried to create their own Bailiwick in their expanding territory, but eventually the possessions of the Teutonic Order in the Northern Netherlands fell under the land commander of Utrecht, while those in the Southern Netherlands were under that of Biesen. The commanderies belonging to the Bailiwick of Utrecht were located in various principalities: Holland (Leiden, Katwijk, Maasland, Schelluinen and Schoonhoven), Zeeland (Middelburg), Guelders (Dieren, Doesburg and Tiel), the prince-bishopric of Utrecht (Utrecht, Rhenen, Ootmarsum and Bunne) and the Frisian lands (Nes, Schoten and Steenkerk). The last foundation of a commandery was that of Schoonhoven in 1395. At that time, the perspective of the Teutonic Order shifted from fighting for

<sup>3</sup> ArchiefRidderlijke Deutsche Orde Balije van Utrecht, Oud-Archief 1200–1811 [hereinafter ARDOU-OA] Inv. Nr. 1718.0, Akte door Sweder van Dingede, opgemaakt tijdens het beleg van Damiathe (Damiatta in Egypte), houdende schenking aan de Orde van zijn hof te Lankarn (Spankeren?), een bouwhoeve in Schalvic (Schalkwijk) en nog een bouwhoeve leenroerig aan de hof Dieter (Dieren?) (1219); ARDOU-OA Inv. Nr. 976.0, Akte van schenking door Sweder, heer van Ringelberg, aan Johannes de Studwege ten behoeve van de Deutsche Orde van een halve hoeve land bij Utrecht (1247). Van Duijl, Jerem, "Collecting property for the founding of the Teutonic House in Utrecht 1218–1235", In: Morton, Nicholas (ed.), *Piety, pugnacity and property* (The Military Orders 7). London–New York, 2020. 59–74.; Van Duijl, Jerem, *Goederenverwerving van het Duitse Huis te Utrecht 1218–1536*. Hilversum, 2022. 33–74.

<sup>4</sup> ARDOU-OA Inv. Nr. 629.01-03, Akte van overdracht door bisschop Jan IV van Arkel aan landcommandeur en convent van het Duitse huis bij Utrecht van een binnen de stad Utrecht in de Springwijk gelegen erf, tot het bouwen van een nieuw huis in plaats van het oude dat verwoest is (1346). Met afschriften (seventeenth century). Van Duijl, *Goederenverwerving van het Duitse Huis*, 2022. 148–149.

<sup>5</sup> Van Duijl, *Goederenverwerving van het Duitse Huis*, 2022. 196–215.

the faith to caring for its own members: *Spital des Deutschen Adels* (Hospice of German Nobility).<sup>6</sup>

Taking care of its own interests, the Bailiwick of Utrecht became involved in the struggle between principalities in the Low Countries, with Holland and Guelders taking large parts of the prince-bishopric of Utrecht. The counts of Holland, who also governed Zeeland and after 1299 Hainaut as well, led an expanding power in the west. The counts, later dukes of Guelders did so in the east. The concentration of power really continued in the fifteenth century, when the dukes of Burgundy took control of more and more territories along the border between France and the Holy Roman Empire. When Duke Philip the Good definitively took over the counties of Holland, Zealand and Hainaut in 1436, a substantial part of the possessions of the Bailiwick of Utrecht came under his rule. With the conquest of the Duchy of Guelders by his son Charles the Bold in 1473, another three commanderies were added. With the occupation of the Utrecht bishop's seat by a bastard son of Philip the Good, David of Burgundy, only the Frisian commanderies remained outside the Burgundian sphere of influence.

Philip the Good and Charles the Bold sought to forge the patchwork of principalities between the North Sea and the Alpine rim into a unity with central bodies such as the Grand Council and the States General, in which the States Assemblies of the principalities met.<sup>7</sup> The administrative center was initially Dijon and later Lille. To bind the high nobility to himself, Philip the Good founded the Order of the Golden Fleece. Charles the Bold even tried to create his own kingdom, but did not succeed. When he fell at Nancy in early 1477, leaving behind only a 19-year-old daughter Maria, the Burgundian complex seemed to be ruined by an attack by the French king and internal rebellions, but Maria's marriage to Maximilian of Austria, son of Emperor Frederick III, saved the situation, albeit with considerable loss of territory, including the Duchy of Burgundy. That loss, however, strengthened the orientation of the remaining territory toward the North Sea.

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<sup>6</sup> Mol, Johannes A., "The Hospice of the German Nobility: Changes in the Admission Policy of the Teutonic Knights in the Fifteenth Century", In: Sarnowsky, Jürgen (ed.), *Mendicants, Military Orders and Regionalism in Medieval Europe*. Aldershot, 1999. 115–130.

<sup>7</sup> Vaughan, Richard, *Valois Burgundy*. London, 1975. 106. Stein, Robert, *Magnanimous Dukes and Rising States. The Unification of the Burgundian Netherlands, 1380–1480*. Oxford, 2017. 22–23.; Van Loo, Bart, *The Burgundians, a Vanished Empire*. London, 2022. 308–336.

## In the Habsburg Power Complex

The marriage of Maria of Burgundy with Maximilian brought the lands she inherited into the hands of the house of Habsburg, which from Frederick III onward would provide virtually all the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire. After Maria's untimely death in 1482, Maximilian, who succeeded his father as emperor in 1493, administered the Burgundian lands as guardian for their minor son Philip the Handsome. Through Philip's marriage to the Spanish princess Joanna, her inheritance came his way after her brother's death. With their son Charles, all lines of heritage came together: Castile, Aragon, Austria and the Burgundian lands.<sup>8</sup> In 1519, he succeeded his grandfather Maximilian as emperor: Charles V.

In the Low Countries, Charles added areas to the Burgundian complex that were not yet part of it: in 1524 Friesland, in 1528 the prince-bishopric of Utrecht, and in 1543 Guelders, which had earlier broken away from Burgundian authority again. Charles administered this part of his now global possessions (including the new Spanish colonies) as a separate entity: the Netherlands. This term served as a designation for the entire complex of territories. The formerly independent principalities, now referred to as the seventeen provinces, were ruled in Charles' name by a governess, first his aunt Margaret and then his sister Maria, the widow of the Hungarian king Louis II.<sup>9</sup> They were based initially in Malines and then in Brussels, the city that henceforth served as the capital of the Netherlands.

The centralization trend of the Burgundian dukes continued with vigor. Orders ran from Charles V through the governess to the stadholders, high nobles who represented his authority in the provinces. Among these men, most of whom were members of the Order of the Golden Fleece, an overall Netherlandish consciousness lived much stronger than among the still regionally oriented lower nobility. This group was represented in the States Assemblies of the provinces. These bodies, curtailed in their power, sent delegates to the States General, which met regularly in Brussels. The powerful advisory councils, the Council of State, the Council of Finance, and the Privy Council, in which academically trained civil servants had an important voice,

<sup>8</sup> Parker, Geoffrey, *Emperor. A New Life of Charles V*. New Haven–London, 2019. 44–65.

<sup>9</sup> Stein, Robert, "Seventeen: The Multiplicity of a Unit in the Low Countries", In: Boulton, Jonathan – Veenstra, Jan R. (eds.), *The Ideology of Burgundy. The Promotion of National Consciousness, 1364–1565*. Leiden–Boston, 2006. 223–285.

reinforced the unity drive.<sup>10</sup> An important step was the Pragmatic Sanction of 1549, when Charles V subsumed the Netherlands into the Burgundian Circle, thus loosening them from the Holy Roman Empire and tying them more closely to Spain. He designated his son Philip as successor in this combination, which was realized six years later, when Charles abdicated. The Austrian lands and the imperial crown passed to his brother Ferdinand.<sup>11</sup>

The Bailiwick of Utrecht was by no means unaffected by power-political developments in the area in which its possessions lay. During the struggle for the incorporation of the prince-bishopric of Utrecht, Land Commander Steven van Zuylen van Nijvelt was killed in 1527 by marauding troops from Guelders. With the incorporation of the Duchy of Guelders into the Burgundian-Habsburg power complex in 1543, all possessions of the Bailiwick of Utrecht fell under Charles V, who was its sovereign from 1528. The land commanders were emphatically loyal to the emperor. With the apostasy of Grand Master Albrecht von Brandenburg in 1525 and the appointment of the German Master, Wolter von Cronberg, as *Administrator des Hochmeisteramtes in Preussen* by Charles V, Utrecht placed itself under this new leader of the Teutonic Order, who resided at Mergentheim castle in southern Germany.<sup>12</sup>

A clear proof of loyalty was the support given by Land Commander Wouter van Amstel van Mijnden to Charles' fight against the Turks. He actually fought with them himself. In 1532, he sent a contingent of 28 lansquenets led by Job van der Does and Jacob van Zuylen van Nijvelt to the German Master to take part in the Turkish war. The mission was expressly religiously motivated "since the Christian faith, God preserve, is violently persecuted and raided by the Turks and the unbelievers to blood, body and goods, yes by robbery, fire, murder and the like."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Kennedy, *History of the Netherlands*, 2017. 101–106.; Israel, Jonathan I., *The Dutch Republic. Its Rise, Greatness and Fall 1477–1806*. Oxford, 1995. 61–79.

<sup>11</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*. 71, 76–77, 143–144.; Parker, Charles V, 2019. 408–424, 462–470.

<sup>12</sup> Miltzer, Klaus, *Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens*. Stuttgart, 2005. 184–187.; Grögor-Schiemann, Daniela, *Die Deutschordensballei Utrecht während der Reformationszeit: die Landkommende zwischen Rebellion und Staatsbildung* (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens 68). Weimar, 2015. 33–36.

<sup>13</sup> "alsoe, God betert, het crysten geloven bijden Tuerck, ind ongelovige scherpeycken aen bloet, lijff ende goet, ja roeff, brant moerde ind anders vervolcht ind overvallen wort." ARDOU-OA Inv. Nr. 136.01-03, Stukken betreffende de uitzending van 28 landsknechten onder bevel van Job van der Does en Jacob van Zuylen van Nijvelt, op kosten van de Balije

In this respect the Bailiwick of Utrecht remained true to its ancient vocation, but otherwise it was less so. Apart from the fact that the land commandery had become a care institution for younger sons and widowers, a “Hospice of German nobility”, there were such much-criticized phenomena throughout the Catholic Church as office-selling, luxurious living, drunkenness and celibacy violations. Successive land commanders Albrecht van Egmond van Meerestein and Frans van Loo openly maintained relations with women. The latter, who was suspected of Protestant sympathies, ceased recruiting priestly brethren.<sup>14</sup>

The rise of Protestantism was a concern for Charles V. At the beginning of his reign as emperor, he was confronted with the church schism, which started with the actions of Martin Luther. In the German lands he could not act against it because of the great autonomy of the princes and the free imperial cities and bound as he was by wars against the Turks and against France. In the Netherlands, he wished to preserve religious unity by cracking down on various forms of Protestantism. Toward the end of his reign, he had to recognize the failure of his efforts to preserve religious unity and restore the Empire to its full glory. The Peace of Augsburg (1555) stipulated that each part of the Empire could determine its own religion.<sup>15</sup>

## Rebels and loyalists

The religious element would play a decisive role after Charles' abdication and his succession as Lord of the Netherlands and King of Spain by his son. This Philip II vigorously pursued his father's policy of centralization and made the preservation of Catholic unity the spearhead of this policy. This evoked resistance, which was strengthened by the king's final departure for Spain in 1559. From Madrid, he sent his directives to the governess in Brussels, his

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van Utrecht, ten behoeve van de strijd tegen de Turken (1532); *Archieven der Ridderlijke Duitse Orde Balije van Utrecht*. Ed. De Geer van Oudegein, Jan Jacob. Utrecht, 1871. Vol. II., 521–524.

<sup>14</sup> Grögor-Schiemann, *Die Deutschordensballei Utrecht*, 2015. 38–43.; Mol, Johannes A., “Trying to survive: The Military Orders in Utrecht, 1580–1620”, In. Mol, Johannes A. – Militzer, Klaus – Nicholson, Helen J. (eds.), *The Military Orders and the Reformation. Choices, State Building and the Weight of Tradition*. Hilversum, 2006. 185–186.; Stapel, Rombert J., “Onder dese ridderen zijn oec papen. De priesterbroeders van de Duitse Orde in de balije Utrecht (1350–1600)”, = *Jaarboek voor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis* 11, 2008, 218–220.

<sup>15</sup> Parker, Charles V, 2019. 463.; Kaplan, Benjamin J., *Divided by Faith. Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge–Mass., 2007. 103–104.

half-sister Margaret of Parma. Philip II saw the Netherlands as part of his extended territories, from which he could squeeze vast sums of money for his great mission: to restore Catholic unity in Europe under his leadership.<sup>16</sup> In the Netherlands he fought Protestantism, of which the Calvinist variant was rapidly gaining ground. In doing so, he showed no respect whatsoever for existing rights. In the growing resistance to this policy, the nobility, feeling its powers curtailed, took the lead.<sup>17</sup> The leader was the stadholder of the provinces of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht, Prince William of Orange from the Nassau dynasty, nicknamed William the Silent. In the summer of 1566, tensions deflated into an Iconoclasm, which reached Utrecht in late August. The deeply shocked Philip II sent a punitive expedition led by a trusted military man, Fernando Alvarez de Toledo Duke of Alba, who used the Teutonic House in Utrecht as his headquarters for some time.<sup>18</sup>

Thousands fled abroad, including William the Silent. Alba pursued a harsh policy of repression. He persecuted the rebels, or whoever he held to be rebels, and imposed heavy taxes, without asking the State Assemblies for permission, as had been his custom up to that time.<sup>19</sup> The Prince of Orange hoped to take advantage of the discontent. He tried to spark a revolt by making raids into the Netherlands with hired troops in 1568 and 1572, but these failed. More successful were exiles who operated at sea, known as the Sea Beggars. They landed on the coast in April 1572 and took control of large parts of Holland and Zeeland. A Spanish counteroffensive literally got stuck in the mud when the rebels breached the dikes. Financial problems on the Spanish side led to mutinies and widespread looting in 1576, after which the King's loyal provinces made an agreement with the rebels in Holland and Zeeland, the Pacification of Ghent, which among other things demanded the departure of all Spanish troops.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Parker, Geoffrey, *Imprudent King. A New Life of Philip II*. New Haven–London, 2015. 140–149.

<sup>17</sup> Koenigsberger, Helmut Georg, “Orange, Granvelle and Philip II”, = *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 99, 1984. 573–595.

<sup>18</sup> Grögor-Schiemann, *Die Deutschordensballei Utrecht*, 2015. 97.

<sup>19</sup> Parker, Philip II, 2015. 80–99, 140–155.; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 1995. 149–153.; Kamen, Henry, *The Duke of Alba*. New Haven, 2004. 97, 102–103.; Pollmann, Judith S. – Stensland, Monica, “Alba's reputation in the early modern Low Countries”, In: Ebben, Maurits – Lacy-Bruijn, Margriet – van Hövell tot Westerflier, Rolof (eds.), *Alba. General and Servant to the Crown*. Rotterdam, 2013. 309–325.

<sup>20</sup> Kennedy, *History of the Netherlands*, 2017. 129–135.; Parker, Geoffrey, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567–1659. The Logistics of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries' Wars*. Cambridge, 1972. 151–152.



The provinces sent delegates to the States General in Brussels, which formed the collective government of the Netherlands. They maintained the fiction that they were not fighting against Philip II, but only against straggling Spanish soldiers. The new governor Don Juan of Austria, a bastard son of Charles V, tried to restore authority. His victory against the Turkish fleet at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 gave him a formidable reputation. He fought against the army raised by the States General, which was called the States Army. This army suffered a crushing defeat against Don Juan on January 31, 1578. William the Silent was now finding it increasingly difficult to hold together the rebellious camp, which ranged from Catholic noblemen to fiercely Calvinistic artisans. He also had serious concerns about financing.

Don Juan's death in October 1578 was a relief. The States General, on the recommendation of William the Silent, appointed Matthias of Austria, a brother of Emperor Rudolf II, but Philip II refused to recognize this appointment. He put forward his nephew Alexander Farnese Duke of Parma. The latter proved to be as brilliant a strategist as he was a diplomat. In January 1579, he managed to dislodge Catholic nobles, who were in distress of conscience because of their collaboration with Protestants against the authority of their legitimate king, from the camp of the Revolt. With the Union of Arras, the French-speaking provinces in the south came under his authority. In response, northern provinces and cities joined together more closely in the Union of Utrecht, against the wishes of William the Silent, who saw the unity of the Revolt in danger.

Parma began a steady advance northward with successful sieges. By offering relatively favorable terms rather than the killing and looting that had been common under Alba, he facilitated capitulation. A huge success was the defection of George de Lalaing Count of Rennenberg in March 1580, bringing the entire northeastern rebellious area into Spanish hands. This Catholic nobleman also acted out of conscience. When Philip II was formally renounced as sovereign in July 1581, the fiction that the struggle was not fought against the king but only against his evil advisors vanished.<sup>21</sup> It became even more difficult for Catholics

<sup>21</sup> The document in which the decision was recorded by the States General, the *Plakkaat van Verlatinghe* (Act of Abjuration), can be regarded as the Dutch Declaration of Independence and is thereby an important step in the state formation process. The argument is a mixture of historical objections to the violation of ancient privileges and modern theories, based on Calvinist theologians, about the justifiable deposition of tyrants. The document served as inspiration for the American *Declaration of Independence* two centuries later. Van Gelderen, Martin, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt, 1555–1590*. Cambridge, 1992. 150.; Lucas, Stephen E., "The 'Plakkaat van Verlatinge': A Neglected Model for the American Declaration

to support the Revolt. Convinced Calvinists were increasingly gaining a grip, much to the chagrin of William the Silent, who liked to see a broad front of faiths fighting the Spanish enemy. The conflict increasingly took on the character of a civil war, with faithful Catholics, loyal to Philip II, versus Calvinist rebels, fighting for their lives, with shades in between. This in-between group calved out by finally choosing between the two poles. With the assassination of William the Silent in July 1584, the unifying factor disappeared.<sup>22</sup>

## The Emergence of the Dutch Republic

The rebellious region, which became a republic (the Republic of the United Netherlands or shortly Dutch Republic) after the unsuccessful offer of sovereignty to the brother of the French king, King Henry III himself and the English Queen Elizabeth I, increasingly took on a Calvinist character, with the text of the Union of Utrecht as its actual constitution. In this structure, each province was sovereign and sent delegates to the States General, now in The Hague, which made decisions on matters of general interest. The sovereign provinces were governed by States Assemblies, consisting of delegates from the nobility and from the towns. In maritime, urbanized provinces like Holland and Zeeland, the town councils were dominant, in land provinces like Guelders, it was the nobility. The delegates to the State Assemblies sat there with an instruction, a *last*, a change in the situation required consultation with the constituency, *ruggenspraak*. In the deputation from the States Assembly to the States General it worked exactly the same way. In crucial matters, such as war and peace or religion, unanimity was required in the States General, so that the new state was more a confederation or alliance, like the European Union or NATO today, than really a country.<sup>23</sup> After all, the Revolt from which the Dutch Republic

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of Independence”, In: Hofte, Rosemarijn – Kardux, Johanna C., (eds.), *Connecting Cultures: The Netherlands in Five Centuries of Transatlantic Exchange*. Amsterdam, 1994. 189–207.

<sup>22</sup> Pollmann Judith S., “Catholics and community in the Revolt of the Netherlands”, In: Scott, Dixon C. – Freist, Dagmar – Greengrass, Mark (eds.), *Living with religious diversity in early-modern Europe*. Farnham, 2009. 183–202.; Pollmann Judith S., “De Tachtigjarige Oorlog in de Nederlandse herinnering”, In: Van der Ham, Gijs (ed.), *80 jaar oorlog*. Amsterdam, 2018. 262–266.; Mörke, Olaf, *Wilhelm von Oranien (1533–1584). Fürst und „Vater“ der Republik*. Stuttgart, 2007. 229–261.; Van Stipriaan, René, *De Zwijger. Het leven van Willem van Oranje*. Amsterdam–Antwerpen, 2021. 479–692.

<sup>23</sup> Israel, The Dutch Republic, 1995. 305–337.; Kennedy, History of the Netherlands, 2017. 137–139.; Wansink, Harm, “Holland and Six Allies: the Republic of the Seven

had emerged was directed against Habsburg centralization. Now a confederate, bottom-up structure had emerged.

A counterweight was the institution of stadholdership. As mentioned above, the holder of this office had originally been the representative of the Habsburg rulers Charles V and Philip II in the provinces, but during the Revolt, the stadholder of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht, William the Silent, had become the national leader. After his death, successively his sons Maurice and Frederick Henry filled that role. The stadholders held the position in several provinces simultaneously. Eventually there were two, both from the Nassau lineage. The powers of the stadholders, which varied by province, would continue to be disputed throughout the existence of the Dutch Republic. Was the form of state purely republican or semi-monarchical?<sup>24</sup>

By the time the search for a monarch was abandoned and the Dutch Republic came into being, in 1588, the situation looked bleak. The Revolt had been pushed back to the northwest corner of the Netherlands, with Holland as the dominant province, now that Flanders and Brabant had been largely conquered by Parma. It seemed a matter of time or the rest, too, would return to Spanish rule, but in the spring of 1588, Philip II ordered Parma to keep his troops ready to support the planned invasion of England, an undertaking that failed utterly. Then the governor had to deploy his military in the French civil war against the Protestant King Henry IV, who came to the throne in 1589 and only converted to Catholicism four years later. Because the attack force was deployed elsewhere, the new state gained air.

The young stadholder Maurice, who led the rebel army, knew how to take full advantage of this. Together with his cousin Willem Lodewijk, the stadholder of Friesland, he developed a new strategic concept. They worked with a small, well-paid and well-trained army and applied scientific insights to sieges.<sup>25</sup> Funding came mainly from merchants in Holland. The province's grand pensionary, Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, provided it. With their flexible armed

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United Provinces", In: Bromley, John Selwyn – Kossmann, Ernst Heinrich (eds.), *Metropolis, Dominion and Province* (Britain and the Netherlands 4). The Hague, 1971. 133–155.

<sup>24</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 1995. 329–335.; Mörke, Olaf, "Stadtholder" oder "Staetholder"? : die Funktion des Hauses Oranien und seines Hofes in der politischen Kultur der Republik der Vereinigten Niederlande im 17. Jahrhundert (Niederlande Studien 11). Münster, 1997.

<sup>25</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 1995. 269–281.; Kennedy, *History of the Netherlands*, 2017. 137–142.; Van Nimwegen, Olaf, *The Dutch Army and the Military Revolutions, 1588–1688*. Woodbridge, 2006. 21–198.

forces, Maurice and Willem Lodewijk carried out surprise attacks. That the soldiers were paid a fixed wage and were not allowed to plunder increased the willingness of towns to capitulate quickly. The garrison was then given a free retreat. In ten years, the two cousins managed to control the entire area north of the great rivers, with some bridgeheads south of them. This meant that seven provinces had seats in the States General: Guelders, Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Overijssel, Friesland and Groningen. The backward region Drenthe was given self-government, but no seat in the States General, while the recaptured parts of Flanders and Brabant were governed collectively as Generality Lands.<sup>26</sup>

Maurice tried to avoid open battles with the much larger Spanish army, but a campaign along the Flemish coast in the summer of 1600 led to a confrontation, which only just ended well for the Dutch.<sup>27</sup> After that, the war stagnated, with even some Spanish successes. In the province of Holland, which carried the bulk of the war budget, voices of peace sounded louder and louder. Negotiations led in 1609 to an armistice for a period of twelve years. This was very much against the wishes of Maurice, who would have gladly fought on. Oldenbarnevelt, on the other hand, favored the peace course. The conclusion of the Twelve Year Truce was a *de facto* recognition of the Dutch Republic by the Spanish king Philip III, who had succeeded his father in 1598. France and England had previously *de facto* recognized the new state as an ally against Spain. The formal position, however, was still that of rebellious territory against the legitimate Habsburg ruler.

The Twelve Year Truce did not bring the hoped-for peace to the Republic. A dispute between two Leiden theologians, Jacobus Arminius and Franciscus Gomarus, over the Calvinist doctrine of predestination led to a major conflict that divided the young state to the core. The two directions called themselves Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants. Several issues that had been going on for years came together here. The first was the position of the Reformed church in society. One option, that of the Counter-Remonstrants, was a church of true believers, with tightly formulated doctrine, strict discipline, bottom-up organization and little government influence, while that church did set the moral standard for society. The Remonstrant alternative was a broad Protestant church without a rigid confession or strict discipline, which allowed a large

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<sup>26</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 1995. 325–328.

<sup>27</sup> Parker, Geoffrey, “The Limits to Revolutions in Military Affairs: Maurice of Nassau, the Battle of Nieuwpoort (1600), and the Legacy”, = *Journal of Military History* 71:2, 2007, 331–372.

degree of governmental influence but claimed much less influence over society. The Remonstrant view linked foreign policy with the pursuit of peace and domestic policy with a purely republican course of sovereign provinces and limited power for the stadholders, while the Counter-Remonstrants sought resumption of the war and a greater degree of national unity led by Prince Maurice. Maurice and Oldenbarnevelt increasingly came to oppose each other, until in July 1618 the prince staged a coup d'état and had his opponents arrested. Oldebarnevelt was sentenced to death and died on the scaffold. The theological dispute was settled by a National Synod, which established doctrine and church structure in orthodox-Calvinist terms.<sup>28</sup>

Maurice managed to increase his power considerably by expanding his competences and appointing supporters to political positions. The conclusion of a final peace with Spain disappeared behind the horizon, and with the end of the Twelve Year Truce in 1621, arms were taken up again. The resumption of the war did not mean a repeat of earlier successes. Prince Maurice failed to find new momentum. The Spaniards even managed to gain victories, including the recapture of the Nassau city of Breda. The stadholder's health deteriorated sharply. He died on April 23, 1625.

His half-brother Frederick Henry succeeded as commander-in-chief of the Dutch army and as stadholder of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Guelders and Overijssel. Ernst Casimir van Nassau-Dietz already held the stadtholdership in the other territories. With this cousin, Frederick Henry had as fruitful a partnership as Maurice had had with his brother and predecessor Willem Lodewijk. Soon came new military successes on the eastern and southern fronts, culminating in the capture of Den Bosch in 1629. A campaign along the Meuse River three years later brought the capture of Venlo, Roermond and Maastricht, but not the desired push through to Brussels. Moreover, Frederick Henry lost his brother-in-arms Ernst Casimir as the latter was killed-in-action near Roermond. After the recapture of Breda in 1637, the successes ceased. The dreamed conquest of Antwerp failed to materialize. The aforementioned siege of Hulst, in which Hendrik Casimir, Ernst Casimir's son, was killed, was a preparation for this.

In the Dutch Republic, the conviction was growing that liberation of the South was not realistic, while the Spaniards began to realize that the North was definitively lost. Both sides began to long for peace. Especially in the cities

<sup>28</sup> Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 1995. 229–260.; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 1995. 437–515.; Kennedy, *History of the Netherlands*, 2017. 154–156.

of Holland this desire was strong for financial reasons, while the Spanish empire was economically on the verge of collapse. In 1646, negotiations began in the Westphalian city of Münster, which resulted in a peace treaty two years later. King Philip IV recognized the independence of the Dutch Republic, which was also definitively detached from the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>29</sup>

## The Bailiwick of Utrecht between the Warring Factions

The dramatic developments in the Netherlands did not leave the Bailiwick of Utrecht untouched. At a time when Charles V and Philip II were vigorously trying to preserve Catholic unity in the Netherlands, the Bailiwick seemed to be breaking away from the old doctrine. As already mentioned, the land commanders Albrecht van Egmond van Meerestein and Frans van Loo openly maintained relations with women and the latter, who was suspected of Protestant sympathies, ceased recruiting priestly brethren. Protestant sympathies also existed among the already functioning Order priests, such as Peter Jansz van Seyst, who would later call himself Petrus Uytenbogaert. He was initially pastor in Schelluinen and later in Schoonhoven. There he carefully conveyed his Protestant views to the faithful.<sup>30</sup> The Iconoclasm in Utrecht, in late August 1566, began after a hedge sermon in an orchard of the Bailiwick. Among the thousands who fled the Spanish repression abroad the following year was Petrus Uytenbogaert, who settled in Danzig.

Alba's presence in the land commandery brought the Bailiwick of Utrecht back in line. In 1570, Grand Master Georg Hund von Wenckheim was received in the house as he passed through with Princess Anna of Austria, the daughter of Emperor Maximilian II as a bride for Philip II. When the Revolt against Spanish authority partially succeeded in the provinces of Holland and Zeeland in 1572, the land commandery became cut off from the commanderies of Maasland, Leiden, Katwijk, Schelluinen, Schoonhoven and Middelburg. The possessions suffered severely from the acts of war. In the commanderies in Holland

<sup>29</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 1995. 659–665.; Kennedy, *History of the Netherlands*, 2017. 182–183.; Wilson, Peter H., *The Holy Roman Empire. A Thousand Years of Europe's History*. London–New York, 2017. 229.; Wielenga, Friso, *Geschiede der Nederlande*. 3rd ed. Ditzingen, 2018. 106–109.; Onnekink, David – Rommelse, Gijs, *The Dutch in the Early Modern World. A History of a Global Power*. Cambridge, 2019. 58–60.

<sup>30</sup> Zuidervaart, Huib J., *Ridders, Priesters en Predikanten in Schelluinen. De geschiedenis van een commanderie van de Ridderlijke Deutsche Orde, Balije van Utrecht*. Hilversum, 2013. 99–100.



and Zeeland, the Reformation was given a free hand. Petrus Uyttenbogaert, returned from Danzig, led this in Schoonhoven until the Spaniards recaptured the town in 1574.<sup>31</sup> The Revolt also led to divisions within the chapter. Besides Land Commander Frans van Loo, also Coadjutor Jasper van Egmond van Meerestein, to whom in 1570 the daily management of the bailiwick had been entrusted, had Protestant sympathies, while among the other commanders the Catholic, royalist line was strong.<sup>32</sup>

After the Spanish garrison was driven out of the city of Utrecht in February 1577, all the possessions of the Bailiwick of Utrecht were once again in one power area. A tolerant religious climate prevailed in Utrecht. The coexistence of different religions was even formally permitted. This lasted until the summer of 1580, when the public practice of Catholic worship was prohibited. This prohibition had far-reaching consequences for the many ecclesiastical institutions. Monasteries were gradually closed, after Franciscans and Dominicans had already been expelled from the city in 1577. The position of the powerful and immensely wealthy collegiate churches was more complicated. Radical Calvinists demanded dissolution of these institutions and confiscation of their property for the benefit of ministers' salaries and the Reformed diaconate. This did not succeed. The noble and patrician families, from which the canons sprang, controlled the Estates of Utrecht such that the interests of the threatened organizations were secure. What argued for their preservation was that most of the canons had supported the Revolt and were now moving with the Reformation. The collegiate churches were converted into real estate corporations run by canons, who were no longer priests and had to be Protestants.<sup>33</sup>

At the Teutonic Order, however, the opposite happened. There, convinced Catholics managed to seize power. By the end of 1576, Coadjutor Van Egmond van Meerestein had already been forced to resign. He was succeeded by Jacob Taets van Amerongen, a fanatic Catholic who was loyal to the king and the Grand Master. His father had been a strongly pro-Spanish burgomaster of Utrecht. Subsequently, the land commander's position came under pressure. After repeated requests to step down, Van Loo consented and left the Order in

<sup>31</sup> Zuidervaart, Schelluinen, 2013. 100.

<sup>32</sup> Mol, *Trying to survive*, 2006. 186.

<sup>33</sup> Kaplan, Benjamin J., *Calvinists and Libertines. Confession and Community in Utrecht 1578–1620*. Oxford, 1995. 113–116.; De Vries, Jan, "Searching for a Role: The Economy of Utrecht in the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic", In: Spicer, Joneath Ann – Federle Orr, Lynn (eds.), *Masters of Light. Dutch Painters in: Utrecht during the Golden Age*. New Haven, 1998. 53–54.

early 1579. In his place, the commanders chose Taets van Amerongen. As co-adjutor, he had already done everything in his power to restore slackened discipline and revive religious duties in the bailiwick. He recruited priests to restore proper church services and revived such disused traditions as the foot washing on Maundy Thursday. After his election as land commander, he was immediately recognized by the Grand Master. Taets also quickly received recognition from the sovereign Philip II.<sup>34</sup> This speed does indicate how very much the new land commander was in the pro-Spanish camp. Precisely to express the connection to the Crusader past, Taets commissioned a portrait series of all the land commanders since 1231. The phrase “Godt hebbe de ziel” (May God have the soul) under each land commander’s name underscored the project’s Catholic signature.<sup>35</sup>

When Philip II was formally renounced as monarch in 1581, sovereignty over the Bailiwick of Utrecht passed to the Estates of Utrecht. Of their policy of relative tolerance, the land commander took advantage. He appointed convinced Catholics as knights and allowed masses to be held in the house. He circumvented the ban on Catholic worship by bribing the bailiff. In other provinces, the Catholic signature of the commanderies did not succeed. The churches of the Order were designated for Reformed worship. The loyalty of the land commander to Grand Master Maximilian of Austria was evident when in 1594 he sent Utrecht knights to fight the Turks in Hungary, together with brethren from Biesen, the sister bailiwick with which Taets maintained warm ties.<sup>36</sup> This mission was in the tradition of the bailiwick, but clashed with

<sup>34</sup> ARDOU-OA Inv. Nr. 282.0, Akte van verlening door Philips II, koning van Castilië enz. heer van Utrecht, van zijn goedkeuring van de verkiezing van Jacob Taets van Amerongen tot landcommandeur van de Balije van Utrecht (1579). Mol, *Trying to survive*, 2006. 198.; Grögor-Schiemann, *Die Deutschordensballei Utrecht*, 2015. 152.

<sup>35</sup> Meuwissen, Daantje, “Faithful to Tradition. The Function of the Portrait Series of the Land Commanders of the Teutonic Order, Utrecht Bailiwick”, In: Mol, Johannes A. – Militzer, Klaus – Nicholson, Helen J. (eds.), *The Military Orders and the Reformation*. Hilversum, 2006. 237–268.; Meuwissen, Daantje, *Gekoesterde traditie. De portretreeks met de landcommandeurs van de Utrechtse Balije van de Ridderlijke Deutsche Orde*. Hilversum, 2011. 103–106.

<sup>36</sup> ARDOU-OA Inv. Nr. 141.0, Dagboek met financiële verantwoording door Willem Mulart en Willem Sloet, ridderheren van de Balije van Utrecht, over hun reis naar Hongarije ter deelname aan de veldtocht tegen de Turken. Met brieven omtrent de toestand van deze en andere ridderbroeders (1594). Militzer, Klaus – Arnold, Udo, “Reisen nach Ungarn. Ungarn und der Deutsche Orden vom 13.–16. Jahrhundert”, In: László Pószán (ed.), *Das Militärwesen im Deutschen Orden*. Vorträge der Tagung der Internationalen Historischen Kommission zur Erforschung des Deutschen Ordens in Debrecen 2022 (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte

the interests of the young Republic of the United Netherlands. For the fight against the Spanish king, the Turks were instead allies. Their attacks diverted the attention of Philip II and then his successor Philip III away from the front in the Netherlands.

## Forced Protestantization

Loyalty to the Habsburg Grand Master was also evident in the passage of the 1606 amendment to the statutes by the Utrecht land commander.<sup>37</sup> That he maintained close ties with the Bailiwick of Biesen, which had many possessions in the Spanish Netherlands, made the loyalty issue all the more acute. Things could not continue to go well. In 1603, the Estates of Utrecht forced the Dutch Hospitallers, who also had their headquarters in Utrecht, to break with their Grand Master in Malta, which eventually led to their dissolution in the Dutch Republic. At the Teutonic Order, Taets was succeeded in 1612 by fellow believer Diederik Bloys van Treslong, whom he had promptly put forward as coadjutor. When Bloys wanted to arrange a Catholic succession in the same way in 1615, the Estates of Utrecht blocked it. They demanded that a new coadjutor be of “the sacred Christian Reformed religion.”<sup>38</sup> The position went to Jasper van Lynden, who was not so clearly profiled in religious terms, but was certainly not a staunch Catholic.<sup>39</sup> His taking office as land commander after Bloys’ death in

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des Deutschen Ordens 96, Veröffentlichungen der Internationalen Historischen Kommission zur Erforschung des Deutschen Ordens 24). Weimar, 2025. 116–126.

<sup>37</sup> ARDOU-OA Inv. Nr. 5.0, Regels en statuten van het Duitse Huis van St. Marie te Jeruzalem, opnieuw vastgesteld door Maximiliaan, aartshertog van Oostenrijk, als administrator van het hoogmeesterschap, ten overstaan en met consent van het Generaal kapittel, gehouden te Mergentheim (1606). Mol, *Trying to survive*, 2006. 200–201.; Grögor-Schiemann, *Die Deutschordensballei Utrecht*, 2015. 163.

<sup>38</sup> “de heylige christelijcke gereformeerde religie”. ARDOU-OA Inv. Nr. 178.0, Rekest door Dirk de Bloys van Treslong aan Gedeputeerde Staten van Utrecht betreffende de verkiezing van een coadjutor of plaatsvervanger, afschrift. (1619). 4r–4v; Mol, *Trying to survive*, 2006. 201–202.; Grögor-Schiemann, *Die Deutschordensballei Utrecht*, 2015. 167–170.

<sup>39</sup> Here, Daantje Meuwissen mistakenly concludes that Van Lynden was Catholic. In fact, Van Lynden’s position was probably more intermediate, possibly as a “lover of the Reformed religion”, someone who conformed to the Reformed church without being a member. Daniela Grögor-Schiemann goes to the opposite extreme, seeing Van Lynden as “der erste protestantische Landkomtur”. In this, she follows De Geer van Oudegein, who describes Van Lynden as a professed Calvinist. Meuwissen and Grögor-Schiemann base themselves excessively on a view of Catholicism and Protestantism as diametric opposites, without seeing

May 1619 ended the Catholic leadership of the bailiwick. This was later seen as a turning point in the history of the bailiwick. Resolutions that touched on the identity of the institution always referred to 1619.

When Van Lynden died within a year, Grand Master Charles of Austria put forward a Catholic land commander, but in April 1620 the Utrecht chapter chose Hendrik Casimir van Nassau-Dietz, still only eight years old, as land commander. Behind this move was Stadholder Maurice, who two years earlier had tightened his grip on the Estates of Utrecht. With the outbreak of the 'Thirty Years' War and the coming resumption of war with Spain in 1621, a loyal Protestant institution led by a relative of the stadholder was of great importance. The young land commander's father, Ernst Casimir, acted as guardian.<sup>40</sup> As mentioned earlier, this stadholder of the northern provinces was the confidant of Maurice's half-brother and successor Frederick Henry in his successful offensive against the Spanish army.

The Bailiwick of Utrecht was now strongly entrenched in this struggle. The Protestantization of the institution could be taken up vigorously. After Hendrik Casimir was declared of age and succeeded his father, who died in 1632, as stadholder of Friesland, Groningen and Drenthe, he continued that line. One problem was that some knights still belonged to the old faith. In principle, new members had to conform to the Reformed church, but previously appointed Catholics were allowed to retain their position and their beliefs. This put the Bailiwick of Utrecht on the lines of the Utrecht collegiate churches and the knighthoods in the various provinces, where an extinction policy was also pursued. In this period, most nobles had chosen the Reformation, either out of conviction or to retain political power. Sometimes the religious determination of choice ran right through families, as with Taets van Amerongen.

Initially, the Protestant knight-brethren of the Bailiwick of Utrecht were still bound to celibacy, as was the case with the Lutheran Bailiwicks of Saxony and

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the diffuse middle group researchers have described in recent decades. Hans Mol assumes this group, and places Van Lynden in this category. De Geer van Oudegein, *Archieven*, 1871. I, CXIII.; Grögor-Schiemann, *Die Deutschordensballei Utrecht*, 184.; Meuwissen, *Gekoesterde traditie*, 2011. 136.; Mol, *Trying to survive*, 2006. 202.

<sup>40</sup> ARDOU-OA Inv. Nr. 302.0, Akte waarbij Ernst Casimir graaf van Nassau enz., als voogd over zijn achtjarige zoon Hendrick, graaf van Nassau enz., belooft alle bepalingen van de Orde, opgenomen in de resolutie van het kapittel van 29 jun. 1619 te zullen nakomen, wanneer de Staten van Utrecht Hendrick van Nassau tot coadjutor zullen verkiezen (1619).

Thuringia and the multi-confessional Bailiwick of Hesse.<sup>41</sup> Abolition of celibacy would mean a break with the Central Order, and that was precisely what the land commander and the Estates of Utrecht wanted to achieve. Hendrik Casimir also had a personal interest. Namely, he wanted to marry Louise Henriëtte, Frederick Henry's eldest daughter, in order to strengthen his position, but to do so he still had to be patient: the princess was only nine years old.<sup>42</sup> However, the prospect of such a marriage and the preservation of his position as land commander was worth it. With the completion of Protestantization and the detachment of the Bailiwick of Utrecht from the Central Order, the goals of the land commander and the Estates of Utrecht interlocked beautifully.

After first appointing his brother Willem Frederik as coadjutor to ensure continuity in the course, the Estates of Utrecht proposed the abolition of celibacy, to which the chapter agreed. On November 10/20, 1637, the Utrecht knights took the decision to repeal the precept "that the Lords Land Commanders and Commanders, who marry, should leave their land commandery and their commanderies."<sup>43</sup> Thus it was henceforth permissible for the land commander and other knights to marry and still remain members of the chapter. A formal ratification finally followed on May 8/18, 1640. This led to a completely new position for the Bailiwick of Utrecht. However, Hendrik Casimir could no longer lead this and the hoped-for marriage did not materialize either. After all, he died a short time later in the battle against the Spaniards. As stadholder of Friesland and as land commander he was succeeded by Willem Frederik, who later married another daughter of Frederick Henry, Albertine Agnes.<sup>44</sup>

The abolition of celibacy was indeed unacceptable to the Central Order. Nevertheless, the successive land commanders of Biesen and the Grand Masters continued to see the Bailiwick of Utrecht as part of the Order. Symbolically, the Utrecht chair at the chapter general's table remained empty. There were even attempts at reunification, but these failed because of the celibacy issue and

<sup>41</sup> Grögor-Schiemann, *Die Deutschordensballei Utrecht*, 2015. 190–191.; Arnold, Udo – Trentin-Mayer, Maike, *Deutscher Orden 1190–2000. Ein Führer durch das Deutschordensmuseum in Bad Mergentheim*. Bad Mergentheim, 2004. 52–53.

<sup>42</sup> Kooijmans, Luuc, *Liefde in opdracht. Het hofleven van Willem Frederik van Nassau*. Amsterdam, 2000. 19–21.

<sup>43</sup> "dat de Heeren Lantcommandeurs ende Commandeurs houwlickende hare Lantcommnderije ende Commanderijen respectievelijk souden moeten verlaten". ARDOU-OA Inv. Nr. 11.02, Resoluties van de landcommanderij van Utrecht (1633–1705). 31.

<sup>44</sup> Kooijmans, Willem Frederik, 2000. 198–215.

opposition by the Estates of Utrecht.<sup>45</sup> It is questionable whether the rupture of 1640 can be considered the outcome of a lengthy process of disengagement, as Daniela Gröger-Schiemann argues. On the contrary, according to Hans Mol, the Bailiwick of Utrecht held on to its connection with the Central Order for a long time.<sup>46</sup> Around 1570 the bailiwick still fitted in completely, and the policy of the land commanders Jacob Taets van Amerongen and Diederik Bloys van Treslong was even diametrically opposed to a disengagement effort. The rupture was caused by outside pressure. After first leaving room to preserve the Catholic character, the Estates of Utrecht as sovereign of the Bailiwick imposed from 1615 the obligation to admit only Protestant nobles as new members and two decades later promoted the abolition of the celibacy obligation, forcing the break with the Grand Master. The fear of unwanted loyalty to hostile powers was paramount. In Mergentheim, too, there was an awareness that the rift could be traced back to international politics. During the first attempt at reunification in 1666, the Grand Master cited the Thirty Years' War and the Dutch struggle against the Spanish king as the cause and, now that peace had been restored, attempted to mend the rift, unsuccessfully, as we have just seen.

## Tucked into a New State

After the break with the Grand Master, caused by the abolition of celibacy, the loyalty of the Bailiwick of Utrecht was completely focused on the new state. Entering members had to prove their commitment to Calvinism with proofs of baptism and confirmation. Incumbent Catholics were allowed to remain, but after the accession of the last Catholic Willem de Wael van Vronestein in 1640 (with explicit dispensation), no adherent of the old church was allowed

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<sup>45</sup> ARDOU-OA Inv. Nr. 131.0, Briefwisselingen gevoerd tussen de administrateur van de hoogmeester, de landcommandeur van Aldenbiesen en de stadhouder van de Balije van Lotharingen met de landcommandeur van Utrecht over de hereniging van de Balije van Utrecht met de Orde in Duitsland (1662–1672, 1775, 1791–1805). DOZA Utr. 386/1, Akten zur Ballei Utrecht, 1664–1666. De Vey Mestdagh, Jan Henry, *De Utrechtse Balije der Duitse Orde. Ruim 750 jaar geschiedenis van de Orde in de Nederlanden*. Utrecht–Alden Biesen, 1988. 44.; Arnold – Trentin-Mayer, *Deutscher Orden 1190–2000*, 2004. 79.; Demel, Bernhard, *Unbekannte Aspekte der Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens*. Vienna–Cologne–Weimar, 2005. 9–92.; De Bruin, Renger E., *Bedreigd door Napoleon. De Ridderlijke Deutsche Orde, Balije van Utrecht 1753–1838*. Hilversum, 2012. 66–67, 170–175, 204–208, 270–280.

<sup>46</sup> Gröger-Schiemann, *Die Deutschordensballei Utrecht*, 28–65.; Mol, *Trying to survive*, 2006. 202–205.



to enter. Only boys who had been baptized Reformed were placed on the expectant list, from which a new member was recruited when a seat became vacant. Those who changed religion later did not stand a chance. For example, the name of Joseph Friedrich von Sachsen-Gotha-Hildburghausen was crossed out: “Has become Roman Catholic.”<sup>47</sup> He had entered imperial service and that would have been worth a mass to him. That he missed out on membership in the Bailiwick of Utrecht as a result will not have hurt him: he was admitted to the Order of the Golden Fleece.

By far the majority of the chapter members held positions within the Dutch state system, as army officers or as members of a States Assembly. The following table shows what functions the Utrecht Teutonic Knights held in the period between 1640 and 1795. In a number of cases, members held several positions. For example, the Frisian stadholders Hendrik Casimir I, Willem Frederik and Hendrik Casimir II were senior army officers as well. Members of States Assemblies sometimes also served in the army, although most regulations excluded the combination. For the table, their main duties were taken. In the case of the three stadholders, that function has been classified as the main task, while Commander Godard van Reede-Ginkel, who joined the Estates of Utrecht in 1691, is qualified as an army officer. He ended up in the rank of field marshal.

Table 1: main positions held by the Utrecht chapter members

	1640–1696	1697–1753	1754–1794
<b>Member of States</b>	13 (43%)	20 (69%)	20 (77%)
<b>Stadholder</b>	3 (10%)	– (0%)	– (0%)
<b>Army officer</b>	9 (30%)	6 (21%)	5 (19%)
<b>Other/unknown</b>	5 (17%)	3 (10%)	1 (4%)
<b>Total</b>	30	29	26

Source: D’Ablaing van Giessenburg, Willem J., *Wapenboek der Ridders van de Duitse Orde Balije van Utrecht sedert 1581*. The Hague, 1871.

The proportion of States members increased over time, while that of the military decreased. This was partly due to the downsizing of the Dutch army after

<sup>47</sup> “Is Roomsch geworden.” ARDOU-OA Inv. Nr. 192.0, Register houdende namen van de leden van de Duitse Orde Balije van Utrecht met hun kwartieren en heraldische wapens over de jaren 1634–1775 en gedeeltelijk met opgave van geboorte- en sterfdata (ca. 1775).

the Peace of Münster in 1648 and again after the Peace of Utrecht in 1713. In a few cases, members served in foreign armies. This was true of both German members and Dutchmen who served in foreign military service. On the other hand, Germans served in the Dutch army. Another factor is that whereas before 1640 the Bailiwick of Utrecht was a destination for younger sons, after the abolition of the celibacy requirement more and more eldest sons, who were expected to continue the family line, became members. They usually inherited the ancestral castle and the seat in the States Assembly.

The members of the Bailiwick of Utrecht largely belonged to the knight-hoods of the provinces of Holland, Utrecht, Overijssel and Guelders. Especially the latter province was strongly represented at the chapter table.<sup>48</sup> These knight-hoods formed the lower, regionally oriented nobility before the Revolt. The high nobility, with a supra-regional or even international outlook, had finally chosen reconciliation with the Spanish king, with the exception of the Nassau dynasty. Members of this family, as mentioned earlier, played a crucial military and political role in the creation of the Dutch Republic. The lower nobility in the northern Netherlands had largely opted for the Revolt and the Reformation. Families who remained Catholic were, for reasons of loyalty, excluded from the States Assemblies, but curiously not from the army. Noblemen made up almost two-thirds of the officer corps.<sup>49</sup> Their share in the States Assemblies varied by province: from one of nineteen votes in that of Holland, to dominance in Guelders. The role of the nobility in the Dutch Republic has long been underestimated. The state has always been seen as a maritime, urbanized society, ruled by a patriariate with a merchant background, with an evident bourgeois culture.<sup>50</sup>

This picture is true only for the provinces of Holland and Zeeland. Holland was indeed the largest, most populous and prosperous province of the seven and brought in 58% of the defense budget, but complete identification with the whole (as evidenced, for example, by the use of the name for the entire

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<sup>48</sup> De Bruin, Renger E., "Die Entwicklung der regionalen Herkunft der Ritter der Ballei Utrecht im Zeitraum 1640–1840", In: Arnold, Udo (ed.), *Globale und regionale Aspekte in der Entwicklung des Deutschen Ordens*. Vorträge der Tagung der Internationalen Historischen Kommission des Deutschen Ordens in Würzburg 2016. (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens 82). Weimar, 2019. 119–149.

<sup>49</sup> Zwitter, Hans L., *De militie van den staat. Het leger van de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden*. Amsterdam, 1991. 225–226, 232–235.

<sup>50</sup> Te Velde, Henk, "How High Did the Dutch Fly? Remarks on Stereotypes of Burger Mentality", In: Galema, Annemieke – Te Velde, Henk – Henkes, Barbara (eds.), *Images of the Nation. Different Meanings of Dutchness, 1870–1940*. Amsterdam, 1993. 60–73.

country) does not do justice to its complicated structure. In the States General, each province had one vote and unanimity was required in crucial decisions. Holland did not even formally have the first rank, Guelders had that as a former duchy. Recent research has shown that the provinces outside Holland were much more important than has always been assumed, that the role of the nobility was much greater, and that the share of agriculture in the economy was greatly underestimated. The one-sidedness of the “Holländische Tradition” has been pointed out before, but now a real plea is being made “Towards a new template for Dutch history”.<sup>51</sup>

During the second half of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries the Bailiwick of Utrecht continued to exist as an independent institution of Protestant nobles within the system of the Dutch Republic with the Estates of Utrecht as the sovereign and thus appointing authority. With the French invasion of 1795, however, the political playing field changed dramatically and this also had consequences for the Bailiwick of Utrecht. The Dutch Republic was converted into a revolutionary Batavian Republic, which had to follow the French ally. Nobility was abolished and institutions like the Bailiwick of Utrecht came under pressure. Through deft low-profile policies, the Bailiwick managed to survive until 1811, when a decree from Napoleon ended its existence.<sup>52</sup> After the end of French rule and the establishment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, King William I reversed the dissolution in 1815, again closely linking the fortunes of the Bailiwick to Dutch state formation. The institution still exists, with members appointed by the king, who must have descended from old, Protestant noble families.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Boogman, Johan Christiaan, “Die holländische Tradition in der niederländischen Geschichte”, = *Westfälische Forschungen*, 15, 1962, 96–105.; Brusse, Paul – Mijnhardt, Wijnand W., *Towards a New Template for Dutch History. Deurbanization and the balance between city and countryside*. Zwolle, 2011. 63–97.

<sup>52</sup> De Bruin, Renger E., “Hidden in the Bushes: The Teutonic Order of the Bailiwick of Utrecht in the 1780–1806 Revolutionary Period”, In: Edbury, Peter W. (ed.), *Politics and Power* (The Military Orders 5). Farnham, 2012. 349–359.; De Bruin, Renger E., “The narrow escape of the Teutonic Order Bailiwick of Utrecht 1811–1815”, In: Schenk, Jochen – Carr, Mike (eds.), *Culture and Conflict in Western and Northern Europe* (The Military Orders 6/2). London–New York, 2017. 222–232.

<sup>53</sup> Archief Ridderlijke Duitsche Orde, Nieuw Archief (1811–2006) Inv. Nr. 1158, Akte van Statutenwijziging Ridderlijke Duitsche Orde, Balije van Utrecht (2006), art. 8–2a; see also Nederlands’ Adelsboek, 2006–2007. XXXIII.

## Conclusion

The Treaty of Münster (1648), part of the Peace of Westphalia, recognized the Dutch Republic as an independent state and formally separated it from the Holy Roman Empire. The protracted conflict, which preceded this, known as the Eighty Years' War or the Dutch Revolt, is traditionally considered a heroic struggle for freedom, but is increasingly seen as a civil war between Calvinist rebels and Catholic loyalists (to the Spanish king Philip II), with all sorts of shades in between. This conflict was linked to the European antagonisms between Habsburg on one side and the French king and the Turkish sultan on the other, with other rulers in varying compositions in between.

The Teutonic Order Bailiwick of Utrecht moved in this field of forces. The fortunes of this institution form, as it were, a microcosm in the great European conflict. The possessions of this heir to the Crusades were scattered throughout the northern part of the Habsburg Netherlands. Starting in 1566, the Utrecht Teutonic knights were drawn into the escalating events. Initially they were divided, but just when the Revolt was radicalizing toward a break with Philip II, the leadership turned its sights toward loyalism and Catholicism.

The loyalty problem with the Estates of Utrecht, the sovereign of the Bailiwick since the abjuration of Philip II in 1581, eventually led to a forced Protestantization, culminating in the abolition of celibacy in 1640, which triggered a split with the Grand Master in Mergentheim. The henceforth Protestant, mostly married knight-brethren served the new state as army officers or politicians. This situation continued until the end of the Dutch Republic in 1795. After the uncertain period of revolution, during which the Bailiwick was even dissolved, restoration followed in 1815. The institution still exists as a society of Protestant nobles.

The story of the Bailiwick of Utrecht in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries highlights two underexposed parts in historiography. First, it deals with the role of the Teutonic Order (and in a broader sense the Military Orders) after 1525. That a part of it, which had become Protestant, played an important role in the political arena, has received little attention until recently. Second, the continued existence of the Bailiwick of Utrecht is a relevant fact in the revaluation of nobility in Dutch society, a society that has always been described as bourgeois.

# **EAST CENTRAL EUROPE: BETWEEN THE BALTIC AND THE ADRIATIC OSTMITTELEUROPA: ZWISCHEN OSTSEE UND ADRIA**

## **Aims and Scope**

The East Central Europe: Between the Baltic and the Adriatic (ECE) is a peer-reviewed academic journal published by the Institute of History at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Debrecen. As its title suggests, the journal focuses on the history of Central Europe, covering the region between the Baltic and Adriatic Seas. This region was for centuries a crossroads and meeting point where diverse ethnic groups, religions, traditions, and political entities interacted in unique ways. In addition to studies directly examining the history of the region, the editors welcome methodologically and/or theoretically relevant contributions for the analysis of historical processes.

The journal seeks to create an interdisciplinary platform to facilitate dialogue and disseminate new research on the region, whose findings are often limited in international scholarship due to language barriers and the influence of national narratives. To support this goal, ECE is an open-access journal, published at least once annually, available in both print and online formats.

## **Zielsetzung**

Ostmitteleuropa: Zwischen Ostsee und Adria (ECE) ist eine begutachtete wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift, die vom Historischen Institut der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Debrecen herausgegeben wird. Wie der Titel schon andeutet, konzentriert sich die Zeitschrift auf die Geschichte Mitteleuropas, insbesondere auf das Gebiet zwischen Ostsee und Adria. Diese Region war über Jahrhunderte ein Schnittpunkt und Begegnungsraum, in dem unterschiedliche ethnische Gruppen, Religionen, Traditionen und politische Einheiten auf einzigartige Weise interagierten. Neben Studien, die die Geschichte der Region direkt untersuchen, erwarten die Herausgeber methodisch und/oder theoretisch relevante Beiträge zur Analyse historischer Prozesse.

Die Zeitschrift möchte eine interdisziplinäre Plattform schaffen, um den Dialog zu fördern und neue Forschungsergebnisse über die Region zu verbreiten, deren Ergebnisse aufgrund von Sprachbarrieren und der Prägung durch nationale Narrative international nur begrenzt bekannt sind. Zur Unterstützung dieses Ziels ist ECE eine Open-Access-Zeitschrift, die mindestens einmal jährlich erscheint und sowohl in gedruckter als auch in digitaler Form verfügbar ist.

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